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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9641
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 1540
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY 0196
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3230
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 6862
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 4371
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 1280
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2439
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 5849
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC PRIORITY 0062
RUEANHA/FAA WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001719

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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, EB/OTP, EB/CBA
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, AMEND
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A
TREASURY FOR PARAMESWARAN
COMMERCE FOR AADLER AND ITA BLOPP
TRANSPORTATION FOR DMODESITT
FAA FOR JHANCOCK AND TMARZIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: ARIANA FLIGHTS TO UAE SUSPENDED

REF: A. 05 KABUL 4140

[1](#)B. KABUL 0444

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Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) Afghan Ministry of Transport officials informed Embassy's FAA representative that an April 14, 2006 ramp inspection of an Ariana aircraft by UAE Civil Aviation Authorities found numerous, serious safety infractions and violations. UAE authorities allowed the plane to return to Kabul without passengers but suspended all/all Ariana operations in the UAE until further notice. With over fifty percent of Ariana,s passenger seat revenues generated from UAE traffic, this suspension will have drastic implications for Ariana,s already fragile financial status. The Afghan Ministry of Transport and Ariana Airlines sent a team, including Post's FAA representative, to Abu Dhabi to explore a resumption of service. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Afghan civil aviation authorities informed us that on April 14, 2006, UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) conducted a ramp inspection on Ariana's flight AFG401, a Boeing 727-200 aircraft. The inspectors found 17 major safety infractions. The flight manual onboard was not issued

to the operator. There was no operational flight plan with fuel planning, so compliance with fuel requirements could not be verified. No lifevests or passenger safety briefing cards were onboard for economy class passengers. The flight engineer's license did not include a medical certificate and the Captain's medical certificate was invalid. The air operating certificate displayed on board had expired on April 1, 2006. The insurance certificate expired almost a year ago. There was one emergency locator transmitter onboard, but its certification had expired in July 2004. The minimum equipment list onboard was not approved by the state of registry for the operator. The total aircraft hours/cycles could not be established. The documents presented indicated that the last maintenance was done in January 2004 and that further maintenance was due 3,000 hours from that date. No noise certificate or radio license was onboard. There was no evidence to indicate that the aircraft was equipped with a ground proximity warning system that has a predictive terrain hazard warning function. These are all violations of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 6 and UAE aviation regulations. The inspection report noted that these findings "give indication of the lack of safety and regulatory oversight by the State of Registry/Operator," in this case Afghanistan's Ministry of Transport (MOT).

13. (SBU) UAE authorities immediately grounded Ariana's flight AFG401. In a letter dated April 15th, GCAA informed the GoA,s MOT that the flight would only be permitted to depart UAE on a ferry flight (empty, no passengers). Further, GCAA asked for a meeting with Ariana and Afghan civil aviation authorities to discuss safety and regulatory oversight issues. GCAA suspended all Ariana operations in the UAE until the satisfactory conclusion of such a meeting. Representatives from MOT and Ariana left for Abu Dhabi on April 15th. The Minister of Transport asked Post's FAA representative to attend in an advisory capacity. He

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departed for Abu Dhabi on April 16th. The Afghan team will meet with GCAA to try to negotiate a resumption of service.

Comment

14. (SBU) As detailed in reftels, MOT does not currently have the capacity to effectively regulate and oversee the safe operation of airlines. Mission support on capacity building and civil aviation legislation will improve MOT oversight in the medium to long term, but Ariana itself has been an obstacle to improving regulatory oversight. As a state-owned carrier that enjoys significant political backing, Ariana routinely disregards MOT regulatory requirements and instructions. GCAA's suspension of Ariana's service will have major repercussions if service is not restored quickly. As UAE traffic comprises over fifty percent of Ariana,s passenger traffic, this suspension will result in substantial revenue losses for an already financially strapped Ariana. This action follows on the heels of Ariana,s inclusion on a list of carriers banned from operating in the European Union a few weeks ago. The status of Ariana,s Boeing lease, a detailed analysis of Ariana,s financial situation, and Ariana,s plan for eventual privatization will be reported via septels. End comment.
Norland